

FOREIGN POLICY REPORTS

*The Political Outlook
in
Germany and France*

April 27, 1932
Vol. VIII, No. 4

25¢
a copy

Published Fortnightly
by the

\$5.00
a year

FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED

EIGHTEEN EAST FORTY-FIRST STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y.

THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK IN GERMANY AND FRANCE

The reaction which the Prussian Landtag vote of April 24 may have on the French general elections of May 1 makes a survey of the political situation in Germany and France particularly timely.

The German section of this report was written by Mildred S. Wertheimer; the French section by Vera Micheles Dean.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE GERMAN REPUBLIC

After two years of unparalleled economic and political difficulties, Germany, in the spring of 1932, is confronted by elections of the utmost international importance. Under the leadership of President von Hindenburg, Chancellor Brüning and Minister-President Otto Braun of Prussia, the Reich managed to survive a period which Dr. Brüning has characterized as "the most difficult winter in a hundred years." The combination of a Protestant President, a Catholic Chancellor and a Social Democratic Premier is an imponderable aspect of the situation which has helped to unite moderate forces in the Reich.

As a result of the elections of March 13 and April 10, President von Hindenburg, whose strong sense of duty has made him a symbol of solidarity in the shifting political currents of post-war Germany, remains in office. His re-election constituted an indirect vote of confidence in Dr. Brüning, whose tenure as Chancellor would have been impossible without the unfailing support of the President. Thus, moderate German opinion has temporarily triumphed. On April 24, however, it faces another severe test in the election of local diets in Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg, Anhalt and Hamburg. Prussia alone comprises three-fifths of Germany.

In the presidential poll on March 13, the Prussian electoral districts gave von Hindenburg 11,020,000 votes, Hitler 6,840,000, Thaelmann (Communist) 3,720,000, and Duesterberg (*Stahlhelm*^{1a}) 1,830,000 — the

^{1a.} The *Stahlhelm* is the German veterans' organization. The *Reichswehr* is the German national army, or militia.

combined opposition polling a very small majority over the moderates. Should that majority be increased in the Prussian election on April 24, which is not improbable, many of the stabilizing effects of the re-election of President von Hindenburg may be lost. Several eventualities may be envisaged. Should the Hitlerites, Hugenberg Nationalists and Communists fail to bury their differences, it is possible that the present coalition government in Prussia may carry on the administration.¹ Should the Right extremists, however, gain sufficient strength to form a government without the support or toleration of other groups, the position of the Brüning Ministry in the Reich would be seriously endangered. Furthermore, while von Hindenburg's re-election assures the loyalty of the *Reichswehr* to the Republic, it is difficult to see how dangerous clashes bordering on civil war could be averted with the Prussian police in the hands of the National Socialists.

During the period of reconstruction, terminated by the evacuation of the Rhineland in June 1930, the moderate elements in the Reich, despite fundamental differences with respect to domestic questions, had been forced to present to the outside world a united front on the major problems of foreign policy. The stabilization of the currency in 1924, the temporary adjustment of

^{1.} Cf. Article 59 of the Prussian Constitution: "In the event of resignation of the entire Ministry of State, the resigning Ministers shall carry on current business until it is taken over by the new Ministers." On April 12, 1932 the Prussian Diet amended its rules so that an absolute majority is now required to elect the Minister-President, who is chosen by the Diet. It is hoped by this means to avert the possibility of the election of a Nazi as Prussian Premier after April 24. (Cf. *New York Herald Tribune*, April 13, 1932.)

the reparation question and the revival of German industry, due to the influx of foreign money, tended to strengthen the moderate forces in the Reich.

Germany, however, was the first country to feel the world depression, and by 1930 was suffering severely from its consequences. As a result, the salutary effects of the evacuation of the Rhineland—four and a half years earlier than had been provided by the Versailles Treaty—were largely dissipated. General dissatisfaction with the government and the Reichstag was increased by the latter's inability to set Germany's financial house in order.² Political confusion reached its height in the general elections of September 14, 1930, in which the National Socialists, on the extreme Right, increased their Reichstag mandates from 12 to 107, and the Communists, on the extreme Left, won 77 seats compared with their former 54.³

Despite the gains of the extremists, the moderate parties, including the Social-Democrats, retained a majority, and the moderately conservative Brüning cabinet, which had taken office on March 30, 1930, remained in power as a minority government. This was made possible only by the toleration of the Social Democratic party, which had previously opposed the Brüning régime. Chancellor Brüning continued to govern by emergency decrees issued under Article 48 of the Constitution, which authorizes the government to issue such decrees in case "public safety and order" are seriously threatened. While these decrees must be submitted immediately to the Reichstag, that body has

2. Cf. Mildred S. Wertheimer, "The Significance of the German Elections," Foreign Policy Association, *Information Service*, Vol. VI, No. 13, September 3, 1930.

3. The party representation in the present Reichstag, elected September 14, 1930, is as follows:

Extreme Right	
National Socialist party	107
German Nationalist People's party	41
Moderate	
German Agrarian party (<i>Landvolk</i>)	22
Evangelical party (<i>Christlich-Sozial</i>)	21
German Peasants' party	6
People's National Union	6
German People's party	30
Economic party	23
Bavarian People's party	19
Catholic Center party	68
State party	14
Social Democratic party	143
Extreme Left	
Communist party	77
TOTAL	
	577

failed to exercise its power of abrogation, despite the fact that Brüning's majority has declined from 82 to 25.⁴

Since its election in September 1930, the Reichstag has held five brief sessions. It convened on October 13, 1930, and after a week of stormy debates gave Dr. Brüning what amounted to votes of confidence by majorities ranging from 82 to 119. The Reichstag adjourned until December 3, when it met again for nine days, and by a majority of 38 votes refused to reject the emergency decrees promulgated two days before the opening of the December session. It then adjourned for the Christmas holidays, reconvening on February 3, 1931 for a session which lasted until March 26. A week after the Reichstag opened, the National Socialists and Hugenberg Nationalists, as a protest against a series of procedural reforms introduced by the government in order to hamper the obstructionist tactics of the opposition, walked out in a body and boycotted the meetings. As a result, the Reichstag was able to undertake constructive work and passed the 1931-1932 budget.⁵ After adjourning on March 26, the Reichstag did not reconvene until October 13 when, during a four-day session, it failed to reject the avalanche of emergency decrees which had been issued by the government to meet the financial crisis of the summer of 1931. On October 7 the first Brüning government had suddenly resigned, primarily as a result of the previous resignation of Foreign Minister Curtius who had borne the onus of the abortive Austro-German customs union project. Dr. Brüning promptly reorganized the Ministry and on October 17 the Reichstag, by a majority of 25, voted down a motion of non-confidence in the new Cabinet. Adjourning until February 23, 1932, it reconvened for another four-day session. The debates were even more bitter and stormy than previously, but the government received a majority of 25.

The Reichstag is divided into four groups: loyal supporters of the present government; several Right parties which waver between opposition and support; the Social Demo-

4. For a summary of emergency decrees, cf. Mildred S. Wertheimer, "The Financial Crisis in Germany," *Foreign Policy Reports*, Vol. VII, No. 26, March 2, 1932, p. 469.

5. One hundred and fifty-one members left the Reichstag; 288 constitute a quorum of the present Reichstag, composed of 577 members.

cratic party which "tolerates" the government; and the uncompromising opposition. In general it may be said that the first three groups, comprising 345 members of the Reichstag out of a total of 577, are favorable to the Republic, while the remaining 232 are violently opposed to the republican form of government, although hopelessly divided in regard to the system with which they would replace it.

The parties now represented in the Brüning government are the Catholic Center⁶ and its offspring—the Bavarian People's party—the State party and an Evangelical agrarian group, comprising in all 122 members of the Reichstag. The two Catholic parties, which are in the true sense of the word center parties, have been the political pivot of all coalitions since 1919. They are moderate and rather flexible in policy, but uncompromisingly republican. The Evangelical agrarian group is a rather heterogeneous confederation of small Protestant parties with predominantly agricultural interests. The State party is the political heir of the old Democratic party and represents the remnants of Manchester liberalism in Germany.

To the Right is a group of conservative parties with a total of 87 Reichstag seats which, while opposed to the government in principle, accords it in practice rather uncertain and wavering support because it dares not take the responsibility of defeating Dr. Brüning. These groups represent definite economic interests,⁷ are nationalistic, and decry the influence of the Social Democratic party in both domestic and foreign affairs. All of these parties, as well as the more liberal non-Catholic groups which are represented in the Brüning government, are rapidly losing popular support, for the most part to the National Socialists.⁸

On the Left are the Social Democrats, the party of the industrial workers, whose backbone is formed by the Free Trade Unions. As its name implies, the party is both socialist (it forms a section of the Second International) and democratic; it bears the major responsibility for the establishment and survival of the German Re-

public. The Social Democratic party, in order to preserve the achievements of the past fourteen years, has continued to tolerate the Brüning government in spite of the fact that the latter has put into effect many measures which are contrary to the interests and program of the party. Its leaders believe that the "preservation and extension of the democratic Republic is an indispensable necessity in the workers' struggle for freedom,"⁹ and have therefore sacrificed many of their principles for this purpose.

Perhaps the two most unpopular measures which the Social Democrats were forced to support indirectly were the appropriation in the 1931-1932 budget for laying down a second "pocket battleship," and the emergency decree of June 5, which contained drastic provisions reducing unemployment benefits. The Social Democratic group in the Reichstag finally abstained from voting on the battleship appropriation, although nine members contravened strict party discipline and voted against it. In the case of the June 5 emergency decree, the Reichstag was not in session and the Right and Left extremists demanded convocation of Parliament to discuss the decree, hoping to overthrow the government. Only the decision of the Social Democrats, at a meeting of the Reichstag Steering Committee on June 16, to vote against a convocation of the Reichstag averted a grave political crisis. Such a crisis would have had incalculable consequences, for the run on German banks had already assumed serious proportions.¹⁰

The official defense of the Social Democratic policy of toleration was summarized by the party's leader, Dr. Rudolf Breitscheid, in a speech at the annual party convention in Leipzig, on June 2, 1931:

"We have not allowed [Brüning's] Emergency Decrees to be abrogated . . . because this abrogation could have been accomplished only by a negative majority which would not then have been capable of any positive action. . . . Because abrogation would have led to a financial and economic breakdown with incalculable losses to the workers; and an unimaginable political crisis."¹¹

9. Cf. the Heidelberg program of the Social Democratic party, quoted in M. Müller-Jabusch, *Handbuch des Oeffentlichen Lebens* (Leipzig, Koehler Verlag, 1929, 5th edition), p. 340.

10. Cf. Wertheimer, "The Financial Crisis in Germany," cited; *The Times* (London), June 13, 16 and 17, 1931; *Vorwärts*, morning and evening editions, June 14, 15, 16 and 17, 1931.

11. *Protokoll, Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag in Leipzig 1931 vom 31 Mai bis 5 Juni im Volkshaus* (Berlin, J. H. W. Dietz, 1931), p. 103 *et seq.*

6. Chancellor Brüning's party.

7. The economic interests represented by these groups are agrarian workers (Agrarian party, Peasants' party, People's National Union); middle class voters (Economic party); and industrialists (German People's party).

8. Cf. p. 47.

Although the Leipzig party convention sanctioned continued toleration of the Brüning government, the minutes of its meetings reflected plainly the unpopularity of this action among the rank and file of the party. The opposition within the Social Democratic party did not, however, come to a head until October, owing to the fact that during most of the summer of 1931 the financial crisis had forced politics into the background. On October 1 seven Socialist Reichstag members resigned from the party; one of the seven joined the Communists and the remaining six formed a new party under the name of "Socialist Workers' Party,"¹² with the avowed policy of furthering the class struggle, while opposing communism.

While only fear of civil war and chaos keeps the supporters of the Brüning government in line, the three extremist parties—the Communists, Hugenberg Nationalists and National Socialists, which comprise the unyielding opposition—are hopelessly divided in their programs and political philosophies, their only bond being opposition. Moreover, these parties are not sufficiently strong in the present Reichstag to overthrow the Brüning government by themselves. Even should such divergent groups win a majority, they probably could not unite to form a new government.

The Communist party¹³ on the extreme Left is not only violently opposed to the present government and the capitalist "system"—wishing to form a state on the Soviet model—but with equal violence opposes the parties of the extreme Right. In contrast to the Communists, who champion proletarian internationalism, the Hugenberg Nationalists and Hitlerites are both intensely nationalist.¹⁴ The Hugenberg Nationalists, as the successors of the pre-war Conservatives, represent large landowners and some heavy industry; they are essentially the party of reaction—monarchists, who have no candidate for the empty imperial throne.

The National Socialists constitute the most important opposition party, and are now un-

doubtedly the largest party in Germany. The meteoric rise of this party at the September 1930 elections, when it increased its Reichstag representation from 12 to 107, has been followed by continued successes in subsequent provincial elections. While in the 1930 Reichstag elections about 18 per cent of the total electorate voted for the National Socialists, in seven local elections held since that time, the Hitlerites have polled an average of almost 32 per cent. In the State of Hesse, moreover, they rolled up 37 per cent.¹⁵ Many observers nevertheless believe that, despite the continued depression, there is a definite limit to the number of supporters Hitler can acquire. The National Socialist party has grown almost entirely at the expense of the non-Catholic bourgeois parties. The Nazis have apparently made almost no inroads in the ranks of the workers, a fact which is borne out by the results of recent elections to works' councils in various industries. These polls of organized labor show that in 1931 the Social Democratic Free Trade Unions received 83.6 per cent of the mandates on the works' councils, the Catholic Unions 7.9 per cent, and the National Socialists only one-half of one per cent.¹⁶

In general the National Socialists owe their present strength to two major sources of German discontent and misery. In the first place, the economic depression has not only caused great unemployment, but has ruined many small businesses owned and managed by middle-class Germans. As a result of these and related factors—notably the desperate straits of agriculture in spite of state subsidies—the German middle class has been in large measure proletarianized economically, if not spiritually. The middle class blames the entire post-war "system"—the Republic, the Brüning government and its association, loose as that is, with the Social Democrats, and the Treaty of Versailles—for high taxes, drastically cut salaries, re-

15. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, November 17, 1931; *Die Tat*, March 1932, p. 948; *Reichstags Handbuch V. Wahlperiode, 1930*, cited, p. 240 *et seq.*; *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich, 1931*, p. 548-549. Elections were held in Bremen, Brunswick, Schaumburg-Lippe, Oldenburg, Hamburg, Anhalt, Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Hesse. For the national figures, cf. p. 49.

16. The total returns were as follows:

	1931	1930
Free Trade Unions (Social Democrats)	83.6%	86.9%
Christian Trade Unions (Catholic)	7.9	7.2
Hirsch-Duncker Unions	1.1	1.0
Communist Unions	3.4	1.5
National Socialists	0.5
Others, including unorganized workers	3.5	3.4

Cf. *Der Deutsche Volkswirt*, January 8, 1932.

12. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 25, and October 2, 4 and 6, 1931.

13. The Communists, with 78 members, constitute the third largest party in the 1930 Reichstag.

14. Cf. Mildred S. Wertheimer, "The Hitler Movement in Germany," Foreign Policy Association, *Information Service*, Vol. VI, No. 23, January 21, 1931.

duced pensions and lowered standards of living. Hitler, with his nebulous National Socialist program, appeals to these more or less *déclassé* bourgeois voters. Furthermore, the inability of the Reichstag to adopt constructive legislation has convinced large numbers of people that parliamentary democracy itself has irreparably broken down.

Secondly, and most important of all, the National Socialist movement is both cause and effect of a tremendous wave of nationalism which has swept over Germany as a direct consequence of the Versailles settlement. The National Socialist leaders have concentrated their propaganda on the reparation issue—the payment of “tribute” as they call it. The Germans feel that

“... the extortion of an acknowledgement for the sole responsibility [for the war] was merely a pretext for squeezing money out of Germany ... As a result of this complication of the moral with the financial problem, popular opposition to reparation payments in Germany is far greater than would normally be the case. ... It is to the continued existence of this reparation problem that the Hitler movement owes a very great deal of its success.”¹⁷

While the National Socialists are essentially a party of protest and agitation, the amazing growth of the movement has apparently caused its leaders to turn from thoughts of assuming power by a coup d'état to the possibility of achieving their ends by normal constitutional means. The financial support Hitler has been receiving from large industrialists, who see in the movement a means of stamping out communism and even socialism, has evidently forced him to temper some of his extreme statements, and has clearly revealed the glaring inconsistencies in the National Socialist program. Time and again during the past eighteen months Hitler has publicly proclaimed the “strict legality” of his party, and stated that it stood “as immovable as granite upon the ground of legality.”¹⁸ His recent statements to the foreign press that the Nazis, on assuming

17. M. J. Bonn, “The Crisis in Germany,” *The Yale Review*, Spring 1932, p. 550.

18. A revolt occurred in the party in April 1931 when Storm Troop leaders in East Elbia accused Hitler of breaking faith with his own revolutionary ideals. Hitler ruthlessly crushed this revolt, giving the Storm Troop leaders throughout the Reich ten days in which to submit unconditionally to his leadership or be expelled from the party. As a result, the masses of the party expressed their loyalty to Hitler.

In spite of Hitler's protestations of legality, the government on April 13, 1932 ordered the suppression of the Nazi Storm Troops which were regarded as a menace to the internal security of the Reich. (Cf. *New York Herald Tribune*, April 14, 1932.)

power, would repudiate reparation but recognize the sanctity of foreign private debts are an indication of Hitler's desire to conciliate foreign bankers.²⁰

Hitler's growing legality is not without danger to the movement itself, since many of his most ardent supporters, notably in the Storm Troops, are young people attracted by the uniforms and military organization of the party and by the prospect of action and adventure. Furthermore, many of them are sincere revolutionaries, who desire the overthrow of the existing social order.

In October 1931 an attempt, accompanied by great publicity, was made to organize the two parties, Nationalist Socialists and Hugenberg Nationalists, into a so-called “National Opposition.” A combined demonstration was held at Bad Harzburg on Sunday, October 11, but even there rifts were apparent between the two leaders, Hitler and Hugenberg: the imposing reviews of Nazi Storm Troops and *Stahlhelm* veterans did not disguise the fact that the combination was unnatural both because of the comparative numerical weakness of the Nationalists and because the conservative views of the latter were irksome to the revolutionary elements of the Nazis.

The so-called “Harzburg Front” received its first rebuff less than a week after it was formed, when the Reichstag by a margin of 25 voted down a motion of non-confidence in the Brüning government. It was obvious from this Reichstag session that it would be impossible to form a new government without the cooperation of the Catholic Center party. As a result, informal conversations between National Socialist leaders and Centrists took place behind the scenes with a view to the possible entry of the Hitlerites into the Reich government—the Hugenberg Nationalists, despite the “Harzburg Front,” not participating directly in the negotiations. Although many responsible Germans desired to take the National Socialists into the government in order either to deflate the movement by forcing its leaders to assume responsibility, or to turn it into constructive channels, the negotiations achieved no results except to widen somewhat the breach within the “Harzburg Front.”

A new effort to effect a *modus vivendi* was

20. Cf. *New York Times*, December 5, 1931.

made in January 1932, when direct conversations took place between Chancellor Brüning and Adolf Hitler with respect to prolongation of President von Hindenburg's term of office, due to expire in May. Brüning proposed to achieve this by means of a constitutional amendment, to avoid subjecting the Reich to the ravages of a political campaign. The support of the National Socialists was indispensable to secure the Reichstag two-thirds vote necessary for a constitutional amendment. Hitler at first appeared willing to pledge the vote of his party, but was later dissuaded by Hugenberg,²¹ who attempted to trade the "National Opposition's" support of President von Hindenburg for the latter's promise to force Chancellor Brüning out of office. This, President von Hindenburg would not consider.

The presidential campaign which followed marked the end of the "Harzburg Front," the Nazis nominating Hitler, who had become naturalized for the purpose.²² The Hugenberg Nationalists put up a candidate of their own, Theodore Duesterberg, a high official of the *Stahlhelm*, hoping to poll enough votes to obtain the balance of power at the "run-off election."²³ The other candidates for the presidency were Ernst Thael-

mann, leader of the Communist party, and Gustav Winter, an obscure man serving a prison sentence, who ran on a program of revalorization of the old German mark. President von Hindenburg finally consented to stand for re-election, at the request of a non-partisan committee which collected more than three million signatures to a petition for his nomination; he accepted with the statement that he "had decided to run again in the consciousness of his responsibility for the fate of the Fatherland." He was directly supported by the Catholic Center, the Bavarian People's, the State, and the Social Democratic parties. The smaller bourgeois groups were uncertain in their support, but election results showed that they cast their votes largely for von Hindenburg.

The election was bitterly fought, the German people being confronted with a single issue: Should the Weimar Republic remain in existence, or should it be replaced either by Hitler's Third Reich, the tenets of which are undefined, or Thaelmann's communist state on the Soviet model.

Posing as the coming saviors of the Reich, the Hitlerites had prophesied victory in the forthcoming presidential elections on March 13 and April 10, the results of which were as follows:²⁴

	March 13		April 10
Von Hindenburg	18,654,244	49.6%	19,359,642
Hitler	11,341,119	30.1	13,417,460
Thaelmann	4,982,870	13.2	3,706,388
Duesterberg	2,558,815	6.8
Winter	111,492	0.3
Scattered	8,661	8,204
TOTAL	37,657,201		36,491,694

The large vote which President von Hindenburg polled in the first election—lacking only one-half of one per cent of the necessary absolute majority—surprised the most optimistic supporters of the Republic. In the second election, his vote was increased by

21. Cf. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 24, 1932.

22. Hitler was an Austrian citizen up to the time of the war, but forfeited his citizenship by enlisting in the Bavarian army and after the war had failed to become a German citizen. He acquired German citizenship on February 26, 1932 when he was appointed to a minor diplomatic post by the State of Brunswick, which is under Nazi control.

23. If no candidate polls an absolute majority on the first vote in a German presidential election, a second or "run-off" election must be held not later than four weeks after the first poll. In the second election the candidate receiving a plurality is elected. The candidates who stand in the first election do not necessarily have to run in the second; on the contrary, the various political groups may present new candidates.

only 705,398, but this was sufficient to give him 53 per cent of the total votes cast.²⁵ In 1925 the veteran Field Marshal had been elected by the German nationalists and monarchists. Since then his steadfast fulfillment of his oath of office to uphold the Weimar Constitution has made him a symbol of the new Germany, and the unprecedentedly large vote which he polled in 1932 consequently reaffirmed the German Republic.

Although on March 13 the opponents of

24. *Der Heimatdienst*, Vol. XII, No. 6, second March number; *New York Times*, April 11, 1932.

25. On March 13, 86 per cent of the qualified electorate went to the polls; on April 10, 83 per cent voted.

the Republic polled 50.4 per cent of the total vote, in contrast to 38.75 per cent in September 1930, they achieved only 47 per cent in the run-off election on April 10. This was apparently due in large measure to the decrease in the Communist vote, which receded 3.1 per cent from the surprisingly small total which the Communists received on March 13.

The National Socialists, however, showed themselves by far the largest of the Opposition parties. In the first election they almost doubled their vote of September 1930, and secured a further two million votes in the second poll. These new votes apparently came from the *Stahlhelm*, whose representative, Colonel Duesterberg, had abandoned his candidacy after the March 13 election. The results of the run-off election showed that evidently two-thirds of the *Stahlhelm* vote went to Hitler.

The presidential elections, while reaffirming the Republic, also constituted a great personal triumph for von Hindenburg. Just how large a factor was the symbolic figure of the old Field Marshal will probably be evident on April 24 when elections are to be held for the local diets of the states of Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg and Anhalt, and for the Council of the Free City of Hamburg. The Prussian poll is particularly important, for the individual German states control the police, and the Prussian government consequently exercises police jurisdiction over three-fifths of the Reich.

Prussia has been governed since 1925 by a coalition of Social Democrats, Catholic Centrists and State party representatives, with Otto Braun, the Socialist leader, as Minister-President. The parties not represented in the Prussian coalition have long

sought to overturn the government. In February 1931 the Nationalist *Stahlhelm* initiated a referendum demanding that the Prussian Landtag, elected in 1928, be immediately dissolved, on the ground that it was no longer representative. The 10 per cent of voters necessary in the first stage of the referendum responded to this demand, but the Landtag rejected the proposal. According to the Prussian Constitution (Article 5) a general plebiscite then became necessary.

The dissolution of the Landtag was championed by the National Socialists, Hugenberg Nationalists, the People's party and several agrarian and conservative groups. During the campaign for the plebiscite, the Communists announced that they also would support the move, hoping that the advent of a Nazi government in Prussia would result in disturbances which might provide an opportunity for the establishment of a Communist dictatorship. Subsequently, however, the Communists appeared obviously unhappy in their alliance with the forces of bourgeois reaction, and their policy proved very unpopular with many of their followers.

The plebiscite, held on August 9, 1931, gave the supporters of dissolution only 36.9 per cent of the vote, thus falling far short of the necessary absolute majority. The Prussian Landtag, therefore, survived to the end of its constitutional term.

While the re-election of President von Hindenburg at the age of 84 for a second seven-year term, this time by a clear majority of the German people, will doubtless serve as a stabilizing influence in the Reich, the battle for the Republic is not yet won. In the final analysis, the future of the German Republic depends on an improvement of the international situation.

FRANCE BETWEEN TWO ELECTIONS: 1928-1932

WHEN the French voters go to the polls on Sunday, May 1, to elect 613 members of the Chamber of Deputies for a four-year term, their votes will be more deeply affected by considerations of foreign policy than at any time since the World War. As a keen observer has pointed out, France "loves domestic politics alone," and takes an interest in foreign affairs only much against its will,

when events force it to do so.¹ Today, however, the uninterrupted rise of German nationalism, the threatened breakdown of Eastern Europe, and the effects of the world depression on France, indicated by rapidly increasing unemployment and a mounting budget deficit, have shaken the insularity of

1. André Siegfried, *Tableau des Partis en France* (Paris: Grasset, 1930), p. 120.

the average Frenchman, whose views on foreign affairs are bounded as a rule by two conceptions—a preference for peace, and a desire to assure the adequate defense of the country's frontiers.² France, like the United States, is beginning to realize that power, whether military or financial, involves not only privileges but obligations, and that a country which would play a leading rôle in international affairs cannot content itself with a negative policy directed at the preservation of the *status quo*. Both the French statesman and the proverbial man in the street are gradually reaching the conclusion that unless France can take the initiative, and present a constructive program with respect to such problems as disarmament, reparation and economic rehabilitation, the predominant position which it has achieved in Europe since the war may be irremediably weakened. An enlightened self-interest thus dictates the adoption of a new course.

France's growing preoccupation with foreign affairs and its search for a policy which, while creating no menace to national security, would be definitely conciliatory in character, is illustrated by the developments of the past four years. Of the ten cabinets which have governed France since the 1928 elections, seven—including the second Poincaré, the Briand, the three Tardieu and the two Laval cabinets—have relied for support on a combination of Right and Right Center parties in the Chamber of Deputies, and only two short-lived ministries—those headed by Chautemps and Steeg—have been controlled by the Radical Socialists, who have consistently refused to participate in any coalition cabinet since Poincaré's ministry of National Union, 1926-1928. M. Briand's presence in all ten cabinets insured a certain degree of continuity in foreign policy. His policy, however, which sought to achieve Franco-German reconciliation, was loyally supported only by the opposition parties, the Radical Socialists and the Socialists, and was frequently attacked in the Chamber by members of the Right and Right Center parties, who regarded any concession to Germany as a dangerous sign of weakness.

2. *Ibid.* In this connection, cf. E. Malcolm Carroll, *French Public Opinion* (New York, Century, 1931); Frederick L. Schuman, *War and Diplomacy in the French Republic* (New York, Whittlesey House, 1931).

M. Briand's gradual retirement from politics after the presidential election of 1931, due partly to the hostility of the Right and partly to ill-health, and his death in 1932, left the conduct of foreign affairs in the hands of Laval and Tardieu who, while not extreme nationalists, advocated a firm attitude toward Germany with respect to disarmament, reparation and treaty revision. The conservative Laval-Tardieu policy aroused the apprehension of the Radical Socialists and of their allies in the Senate, the Democratic Left. The latter twice defeated a cabinet of the Right—in December 1930, when it overthrew the Tardieu government which it attacked on both foreign and domestic affairs, and in February 1932, when it caused the downfall of M. Laval, whom it opposed both on foreign policy and on electoral reform.³ The third Tardieu cabinet, now in power, has apparently decided to chart a different course, and sponsors a program which includes Franco-British collaboration, rapprochement with Germany, the "adjustment" of reparation and the economic reconstruction of Eastern Europe by means of a Danubian tariff union. M. Tardieu, moreover, has stolen the thunder of the Radical Socialists and Socialists by advocating the creation of an international police force, League control of civil aviation and reduction of military expenditures, which had been championed by the opposition parties. The new Tardieu policy presents a strong contrast to the views expressed by the Premier in 1930, when he declared that treaty revision under Article 19 of the League Covenant would never take place because such action required unanimity, which France would make impossible, and that France had undertaken no obligation to disarm when it signed the Covenant. M. Tardieu's conciliatory program may be no more than a shrewd political move designed to win electoral support. Some observers believe, however, that the Premier desires to assure French leadership in European politics and that, fearing opposition from the Right to a more liberal foreign policy, he is seeking to obtain Radical Socialist participation in the next cabinet, which he hopes to form when the new Chamber convenes early in June.

3. Cf. p. 52.

The general elections may offer three possible alternatives: the Right and Center parties may retain their parliamentary majority, in which case M. Tardieu would probably reconstitute his cabinet, taking the leadership in foreign affairs; the Radical Socialists, failing to make the expected gains at the polls, may agree to participate in a coalition ministry, on the ground that the economic emergency calls for a *Union Sacrée*, such as existed during the World War and during the reconstruction period, 1926-1928; finally, the Radical Socialists, should they achieve a victory at the polls, may form a *Cartel des Gauches*, similar to the one which held office under Herriot in 1924-1926. The latter alternative, however, pre-supposes first, that the Left parties will succeed in winning a little over three hundred seats—about forty more than they now hold in the Chamber—and thus obtain a majority in the lower house; and second, that the Socialists would be willing to participate in a Radical Socialist ministry, which they refused to do in 1929.

The French voters will cast their ballots under an electoral system known as *scrutin d'arrondissement*, based on single-member districts, which provides that a candidate, to be elected, must receive a clear majority of all the votes polled in each district. If no candidate meets this requirement, a *ballotage*, or supplementary election, is held on the following Sunday, when a plurality is sufficient for election.⁴ The interval between the two ballots is frequently utilized by some parties to effect transactions with other groups holding similar views, in the course of which the votes won by each on the first ballot form the object of undisguised political bargaining. This practice has been particularly common among Radical Socialists, who invariably present their own candidates on the first ballot, but are ready to "cooperate" with neighboring parliamentary groups, especially Socialists, in the second round.

The second ballot has been frequently criticized on the ground that it falsifies the expression of popular opinion, sacrifices ideas and programs to sordid political considerations, encourages electoral corruption,

and entails unnecessary expense.⁵ An attempt to reduce the number of second ballots was made in the electoral bill sponsored by Georges Mandel, chairman of the Chamber Commission on Universal Suffrage, which provided that a candidate receiving 40 per cent of the votes on the first ballot would be declared elected. This bill was vigorously opposed in the Chamber by the Radical Socialists, who denounced it as a measure designed to defeat the Left parties at the polls and who employed every known method of obstruction to prevent its passage. On February 12, 1932, however, the Chamber of Deputies adopted the bill by a vote of 288 to 1, after the Radical Socialists and Socialists had withdrawn under the leadership of Edouard Herriot. The Democratic Left in the Senate championed the cause of the Radical Socialists, and attacked the Mandel bill on February 16, when it unexpectedly defeated the Laval cabinet by a vote of 157 to 134.⁶ On March 17, in the midst of tumultuous scenes, the Radical Socialists, supported by some of the moderate parties, succeeded in shelving the bill in the Chamber.⁷

Whatever the disadvantages of the second ballot, the proportion of seats obtained by the various parties in the Chamber of Deputies in 1928 corresponded fairly accurately, with one exception, to the number of votes which they had respectively polled. Of 9,351,000 voters, or 83 per cent of those registered, who went to the polls, 41 per cent voted for the Left, 22 per cent for the Center and 23 per cent for the Right parties, while 11 per cent voted for the Communists. In the Chamber as finally constituted, 44 per cent of a total of 610 seats were obtained by the Left, 27 per cent by the Center, and 24 per cent by the Right parties, the Communists securing only 2 per cent, or one-fifth of the proportion to which they were entitled

5. *Journal des Débats*, November 27, 1931, p. 862; December 18, 1931, p. 980; February 5, 1932, p. 182. Cf. also Herman Finer, *The Theory and Practice of Modern Government* (New York, Dial Press, 1932, 2 volumes), Vol. II, p. 913. Of the 3,700 candidates who ran in 1928 for 612 seats in the Chamber, only 187 were elected on the first ballot; of the 422 deputies elected on the second ballot, only 300 received a majority. Georges Lachappelle, *Les Elections Législatives, 22-29 Avril 1928* (Paris, Roustan, 1928), p. V and VI.

6. Cf. p. 51.

7. A rider to the bill providing for women's suffrage, which had been approved by the Chamber, likewise suffered a setback in the Senate, when the latter decided to postpone debate on this question until June, thus precluding feminine participation in the 1932 elections. The defeat of this measure was due largely to the anti-clericalism of the Democratic Left in the Senate, which fears that the clergy would exercise a decisive influence on women's votes.

4. For the history of the French electoral system, cf. A. Esmein, *Éléments de Droit Constitutionnel Français et Comparé* (Paris, Sirey, 1921, 2 volumes), Vol. II, p. 298 et seq.

by reason of the popular vote.⁸ The composition of the present Chamber, whose term expires on June 1, is as follows:

Independents	35	
Republican-Democratic Union	81	Right
Popular Democrats	18	
Radical and Social Left	15	
Democratic and Social Action	29	Center
Left Republicans	64	
Radical Left	50	
Republican Socialists and French Socialists	25	
Independent Left	29	Left
Radicals and Radical Socialists	107	
Socialists	112	
Communists	11	
Not inscribed	3	
No Group	23	
 Total	602	

Despite their tendency to break up into fractions, the French parties may be grouped into three main alignments—Right, Center and Left. The Right parties oppose certain social reforms, favor a nationalist foreign policy, and champion the cause of the Catholic Church against the encroachments of the secular state. In their opposition to socialism the Right parties have the support of the Center groups which, however, generally hold less intransigent views on foreign affairs, and are less pro-clerical in their sympathies. Finally, the Left, while showing a wide divergence of views on social questions, supports advanced labor legislation, favors disarmament, Franco-German rapprochement and active cooperation with the League of Nations, and demands the extension of secular education. All of the parties, with the exception of the monarchists on the extreme Right, and the Communists on the extreme Left, accept the republican form of government as established in 1875, and contemplate no radical political change.⁹

The most important party on the Right is the Republican-Democratic Union, a conservative group representing non-royalist aristocrats, financiers and big industrialists. The leader of this group, Louis

8. Siegfried, *Tableau des Partis en France*, cited, p. 189-190.

9. For information on the organization, programs and recent activities of French political parties, cf. Fernand Corcos, *Catéchisme des Partis Politiques* (Paris, Montaigne, 1932); Finer, *The Theory and Practice of Modern Government*, cited, Vol. I, p. 600 et seq.; Maurice Privat, *Les Heures d'André Tardieu et la Crise des Partis* (Paris, Editions des Portiques, 1930); Siegfried, *Tableau des Partis en France*, cited; *The Political Handbook of the World*, 1932 (New York, Harper, 1932).

Marin, is a violent nationalist. The Republican-Democratic Union opposes treaty revision, decries relations with the U.S.S.R. as long as the Soviet government "remains an annex of the Third International and refuses to recognize its debts," demands close collaboration with the Little Entente in its "resistance to Pan-Germanism and Bolshevism," advocates a treaty of amity with Italy, and opposes disarmament as long as "Germany remains a menace and security is not assured by definite juridical organization and by an international police force." This party is pro-clerical in its sympathies, and demands restoration of Church property and protection for missionary congregations. With respect to domestic affairs, it opposes advanced social legislation, notably the eight-hour day; champions economic individualism and a policy of *laissez-faire*; and resists state monopolies, government supervision of industry and commerce, as well as any increase in income or business taxation.

The Center is composed of three principal groups—the Left Republicans, the Democratic and Social Action, and the Radical Left—which represent the industrial and commercial middle class. Of these three groups, the Democratic and Social Action, formed after the 1928 elections, is the most conservative. With respect to domestic affairs it advocates state aid for private religious schools, economic individualism and high protectionism, supports a certain measure of social reform, but resists state monopolies, the capital levy and increased direct taxation. In foreign affairs it opposes treaty revision, while accepting collaboration with the League of Nations. Its principal leaders in the Chamber are Paul Reynaud, Minister of Justice, and Louis Rollin, Minister of Commerce.

The Left Republicans, who hold less conservative views, advocate a conciliatory foreign policy, and collaborate with any government which is not openly socialist, pacifist or anti-clerical. This group has furnished several able ministers in recent years, including André Tardieu, Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs; Georges Leygues, former Minister of Marine; Pierre-Etienne Flandin, Minister of Finance; and François Piétri, Minister of National Defense.

The Radical Left is the most progressive Center group, and on occasion supports the Radical Socialists while consistently opposing the Socialists. The Radical Left supports the Locarno treaties and favors diplomatic relations with the Vatican, but resists the re-establishment of the Catholic Church. One of its most prominent leaders was the late Louis Loucheur, Minister of Labor in five cabinets since 1928.

The Left includes the Republican Socialists, the Radical Socialists and the Socialists, with the Communists at the extreme Left. The Republican Socialist party was formed in 1905 when its leaders, Aristide Briand and René Viviani, refused to subscribe to the program adopted by several other French Socialist groups at the Amsterdam Congress of the Second (Socialist) International. The Re-

publican Socialists regard Franco-German collaboration as the keystone of European politics, support the League of Nations and the Locarno treaties, are generally anti-clerical, and favor extension of state monopolies for the purpose of achieving a moderate degree of socialism. The party leaders in the Chamber include Jean Hennessy and Paul Painlevé.

Left of the Republican Socialists sit the Radicals and Radical Socialists, one of the most important parties in France and the second largest group in the Chamber. This party represents small farmers, retail merchants and government employees, and occupies a position midway between the conservative parties which would preserve the existing social order, and the socialist groups which seek to reform it. Despite its numbers in the Chamber, the Radical Socialist party has failed since 1926 to form a long-lived ministry, chiefly because of its reluctance to cooperate with other political groups. In the field of foreign affairs the party advocates reconciliation with Germany, cooperation with the League of Nations, a trade treaty with the Soviet Union, and progressive disarmament under League control. It opposes revision of the peace treaties, however, and its leader, Edouard Herriot, has repeatedly championed the formula "arbitration, security, disarmament," which he interprets in the sense that arbitration and security must precede disarmament. The more "militant" members of the party, notably Jacques Kayser, would go further, and demand that France, the victor, take the initiative in effecting a rapprochement with vanquished Germany, and that it cease to oppose revision of the peace treaties under Article 19 of the League Covenant.¹⁰ Kayser, moreover, asserts that France, by the provisions of the Covenant, undertook the obligation to disarm, and advocates general, integral disarmament subject to international control, on the ground that "either disarmament will precede security, or else there will be no security."¹¹

With respect to domestic affairs, the Radical Socialist party advocates reduction of military expenditures, sponsors labor legislation, especially with regard to social insurance, favors the nationalization of public utilities, approves income taxes, and would strengthen secular education by the creation of a single school system.¹² The leaders of the party in the Chamber, in addition to Herriot, are Edouard Daladier, Camille Chautemps, Louis Malvy, and Pierre Cot.

The Socialist party was formed in 1905 by the fusion of several Socialist groups following the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International. The ultimate goal of this party, whose program is in many respects similar to that of the British Labour party, is social revolution. Pending the outbreak of revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, the Social-

ists are hostile to the Senate and advocate the extension of free compulsory secular education; oppose foreign loans, especially to countries governed by dictatorships; advocate administrative economies and increased direct taxation; urge the nationalization of public services, notably railways, and the extension of state monopolies; favor an agrarian policy devoted to the interests of farm workers, small landowners and tenants; and sponsor labor legislation, social insurance, and increased salaries and pensions for government employees. Contrary to classical Marxism, the Socialists favor the preservation of small properties, in the hope of winning votes in agricultural communities.

In the field of foreign affairs, the Socialist party supports all proposals for international collaboration; champions the League of Nations, the International Labour Office and the Locarno treaties; criticizes alleged excesses in the application of the peace treaties; opposes diplomatic relations with the Vatican; favors closer ties with the Soviet Union; and, while recognizing "the principle of national defense," advocates reduction of the term of compulsory service and of military expenditures. As in the case of the Radical Socialists, certain individual Socialists in the vanguard of the party, notably its leader, Léon Blum, support a more advanced foreign policy. Like Jacques Kayser, Blum deplores the French government's refusal to consider any modification of the peace treaties under Article 19 of the League Covenant. In opposition to Herriot, Blum presents the formula "security through arbitration and disarmament."¹³ He consequently demands progressive and simultaneous disarmament on the part of all states, which he regards as the only alternative to a further increase of armaments. In his opinion, moreover, civil aviation should be placed under the control of the League of Nations, thus preventing the possible transformation of commercial into military planes.¹⁴

The leaders of the Socialist party, in addition to Léon Blum, are Vincent Auriol, Paul Faure, Pierre Renaudel, and Fernand Bouisson, Speaker of the Chamber. The activities of the Socialist party, which is the largest in the present Chamber, are distinctly limited by its unwillingness to participate in any coalition government. So reluctant is the party, as a rule, to share political responsibility with any but a Socialist ministry that it makes a practice of either voting against the "capitalistic" budget, or else abstains from voting. In recent municipal elections, however, the Socialists have tended to win votes both from Radical Socialist elements, which regard Herriot's party as too conservative, and from elements once favorable to communism which fear the latter's attacks on private property.

The seats at the extreme Left of the Chamber are occupied by the Communist party, the French section of the Third (Communist) International, which was formed in 1920 by a split from the So-

10. Jacques Kayser, *La Paix en Péril* (Paris, Gallimard, 1931).

11. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

12. Parti Républicain Radical et Radical-Socialiste, *Programme du Parti* (Paris, Comité Exécutif, Rue de Valois, 1932).

13. Léon Blum, *Les Problèmes de la Paix* (Paris, Stock, 1931).

14. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

cialist party at the Congress of Tours. The French Communists subscribe to the revolutionary program of the Third International, and advocate destruction of the bourgeois state by violent means, to be effected by workers and peasants under Communist leadership; the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat during the period of transition from capitalism to communism; the confiscation of industrial enterprises, the expropriation of landed property and the nationalization of means of communication; state control over industry and banking; the annulment of foreign debts; a seven-hour day; and extensive social insurance. The leaders of the party in the Chamber are Marcel Cachin and André Picquemal.

While elections to the Senate, one-third of which is renewed every three years, do not coincide with those to the Chamber and frequently reflect political trends which have not yet become apparent in the lower house, it is important to note the present party alignment in the second chamber, which is as follows:

Right	8	Right
Republican Left	20	
Republican Union	69	Center
Democratic and Radical Union	32	
Democratic Left	151	Left
Socialist Group	18	
Independents	12	
 Total	310	

In contrast to the Chamber, where a Right and Center majority holds sway, the Senate is controlled by a powerful Left group, the Democratic Left, which supports the Radical Socialists in the lower house on many fundamental questions. The influential position of the Democratic Left is a factor with which any Right and Center cabinet must reckon if it wishes to escape defeat in the Senate. While the upper house has exercised its right to overthrow the ministry on only three occasions between 1875 and 1930, it did not hesitate to defeat the second Tardieu cabinet in December 1930, and upset the second Laval cabinet in February 1932, on the eve of the general elections, largely because it disapproved of the proposed electoral reform which the Radical Socialists had attacked in the Chamber.¹⁶ The Senate has furnished a number of able ministers, notably Raymond Poincaré, Henri Chéron and

Alexandre Millerand (Republican Union); Joseph Caillaux and Albert Sarraut (Democratic Left); and Pierre Laval (Independent).

The multiplicity of political groups in the Chamber, and the fact that at present no single party commands a majority make a coalition ministry composed of representatives of two or more parties inevitable. The success of the Right and Right Center parties in forming and maintaining cabinets which, except for two intervals of approximately one month each, have ruled continuously since 1928, may be attributed less to their numerical strength, than to the fact that, unlike the Radical Socialists, they are willing to participate in coalition ministries.

The fluctuations of French parliamentary life are revealed by the history of the ten cabinets which have held office during the past four years.¹⁸ The elections of 1928 resulted in an overwhelming vote of confidence in the economic and financial program which Raymond Poincaré, Premier of a Ministry of National Union which included four Radical Socialists, had sought to carry out since 1926, when the franc had fallen to the lowest point in its history, and the budget deficit had reached dangerous proportions. Strengthened by popular approval, M. Poincaré returned before the new Chamber with his former ministry, in which all important parties, from the Republican-Democratic Union on the Right to the Radical Socialists on the Left, were represented. The principal achievements of this cabinet were the stabilization of the franc on June 25, 1928, and the conclusion of the Briand-Kellogg pact in August of that year. The economic appeasement which followed currency stabilization, however, facilitated the resumption of party controversies. Early in November 1928, at the Congress of Angers, the "militant" Radical Socialists voted in favor of a break with the Ministry of National Union which they had tolerated only as an emergency measure. The four Radical Socialist ministers—Edouard Herriot, Albert Sarraut, Henri Queuille and Léon Perrier—consequently resigned, and were replaced by Left

16. Cf. Jean Morini-Comby, "La France en 1928 et 1929: Etude de sa Politique Intérieure," *L'Année Politique Française et Etrangère*, December 1929, p. 419; Roger Nathan, "Les Dix Ministères de la Législature 1928-1932," *L'Europe Nouvelle*, March 26, 1932, p. 396; "Les Déclarations Ministérielles," *ibid.*, p. 404.

Republican deputies and members of the Republican Union in the Senate.¹⁷

The second Poincaré cabinet, which relied on the support of a Right and Center majority, held office from November 1928 to July 1929. The outstanding events of this period were the ratification of the Briand-Kellogg pact, and of the Mellon-Bérenger and Churchill-Caillaux debt agreements, which provided for the funding of France's war debts to the United States and Great Britain. Having thus laid the bases of economic reconstruction, M. Poincaré resigned on July 26, on the ground of ill-health. He was succeeded as Premier by Aristide Briand, Minister of Foreign Affairs under Poincaré, who remained at the Quai d'Orsay, and retained the entire cabinet of his predecessor, with André Tardieu as Minister of the Interior. Briand's eleventh ministry was marked by the first Hague Conference, held in August 1929, which attempted to reach an accord on reparation. The Premier's conciliatory foreign policy, which was supported by the Radical Socialist opposition, paradoxically enough met with severe criticism on the part of some of the Right groups constituting his parliamentary majority, headed by André Maginot, Minister of the Colonies. In October 1929 the Briand cabinet was overthrown by the Chamber on the ground that the Premier had refused to furnish explanations regarding international negotiations then in progress.

During the ten-day interim which followed Briand's defeat, Edouard Daladier, a Radical Socialist, attempted to form a cabinet with the participation of the Socialists. While the Socialist group in the Chamber, contrary to its usual practice of abstaining from collaboration with a bourgeois government, favored such a course, it was rejected by the National Socialist Council. M. Daladier having failed to effect a coalition of Left forces, M. Clémentel tried to form a "Left Concentration," which proved likewise unsuccessful. André Tardieu, a Left Republican who had served in the second Poincaré and the Briand cabinets, and occupied a relatively independent position in the Chamber, finally constituted a cabinet in November. This cabinet, in which M. Tardieu retained the portfolio of the Interior, and which re-

lied for support on the moderate Right and Center parties, emphasized internal rather than foreign policy, and came before the Chamber with a program devoted principally to measures designed to strengthen national defense, to expand industrial and agricultural production, and to inaugurate what the Premier described as a "policy of prosperity." M. Tardieu's program, distinctly conservative with respect to foreign policy, yet favorable to financial and labor legislation supported by the Left, such as tax reduction and the national insurance law, contained a number of ambiguities which aroused criticism in the chamber. No sooner had the Second Hague Conference finally completed the Young Plan, and the London Naval Conference opened in January 1930, than the Tardieu cabinet was overthrown by the Chamber when the Radical Socialists attacked the "niggardly" policy of Henri Chéron, Minister of Finance, who opposed tax reduction and the increase of government pensions. Camille Chautemps, a Radical Socialist, attempted to form a "Left Concentration" cabinet, combining all Left groups except the Socialists, in which he offered important posts to M. Tardieu; the latter refused, however, and the Chautemps cabinet was defeated on February 26, 1930, on its first appearance in the Chamber.

The second Tardieu cabinet, constituted in March 1930, was once more composed of Right and Center parties, after Herriot, Caillaux and Painlevé had refused to join it.¹⁸ M. Tardieu's ministerial declaration of March 15, 1930 was devoted almost exclusively to financial and economic questions which the world depression had brought to the fore, and indicated that his government favored protectionism and state assistance to agriculture. The tenure of the second Tardieu cabinet was marked in the field of foreign affairs by the ratification of the Young Plan on April 5, and that of the optional clause of the World Court statute on June 13; the publication in May of M. Briand's memorandum on the European Union, which he had sketched out at Geneva in September 1929; and the evacuation of the Rhineland on June 30, four and a half years before the

17. Every French cabinet includes two or more Senators.

18. Paul Reynaud succeeded Henri Chéron as Minister of Finance, while Louis Loucheur, who had served as Minister of Labor in five cabinets since 1928, was replaced by Pierre Laval, an independent Senator, apparently because M. Loucheur had accepted the Labor portfolio in the Chautemps ministry.

date originally set. The national insurance law, which established a fund for old age, sickness and incapacity insurance, to be constituted by equal contributions from workers and employers, but failed to provide for unemployment insurance, went into effect in July 1930.¹⁹ The government increased veterans' pensions, raised the salaries of judges and army officers, and attempted to provide farm relief by raising duties on wheat, wine and sugar.

The economic situation in France, however, had begun to reflect the world crisis. The introduction of the national insurance law provoked strikes in the textile region of Northern France, where the workers demanded an increase in wages corresponding to the premiums which they had to pay for insurance. The failure of the Oustric financial organization, in which several government officials were directly or indirectly involved, created a major political scandal. The country had meanwhile been alarmed by the German agitation for treaty revision, inaugurated in the summer of 1930, and by the victory of the National Socialists under Adolf Hitler's leadership in the September 1930 elections. Apparently under the influence of these events, M. Tardieu made an intransigent speech on foreign affairs in the Chamber on November 13, indicating that France would adhere to the letter of the peace treaties, would suffer no revision under Article 19 of the League Covenant, and was under no obligation to disarm. Criticism of M. Tardieu's foreign and domestic policy by the Democratic Left in the Senate, which denounced it as conservative, caused his defeat in the upper house on December 4, 1930.

Louis Barthou and Pierre Laval having failed to form a cabinet, Théodore Steeg, a Democratic Left Senator and former Resident-General of Morocco, constituted a ministry composed of representatives of all important Left parties except the Socialists, and of Democratic Left Senators. M. Steeg's ministerial declaration of December 19 was devoted chiefly to measures intended to alleviate the economic crisis. The Steeg ministry was immediately attacked by the Louis Marin and Tardieu groups in the Chamber, which defeated it on January 22, 1931.

19. Cf. Amy Hewes, "France's Social Insurance Laws," *Current History*, September 1930, p. 1150.

This short-lived Radical Socialist cabinet was succeeded by the first Laval ministry, which once more relied on the Right and Center parties. The Laval government, like the two Tardieu ministries, occupied an ambiguous position in the Chamber: the Left, which agreed whole-heartedly with the Briand foreign policy, voted against the government, which it regarded as distinctly conservative, while the Right, which lost no opportunity to attack Briand, supported the cabinet it had helped to form. The situation was considerably embittered by the announcement, on March 21, 1931, of the Austro-German project for a customs union, which the Right denounced as the logical development of Briand's conciliatory policy toward Germany.²⁰ Despite the hostility of the Right to Briand's views on foreign affairs, the Foreign Minister was persuaded by his friends on May 11 to enter his candidacy for the presidency of the French Republic. The election thereafter became a contest between Briand, supported by the Radical Socialists and the Socialists, notably Léon Blum, who praised him as an apostle of peace, and Paul Doumer, president of the Senate, who, while a member of the Democratic Left, was championed by the Nationalists and the parties of the Right. On May 13 the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, voting jointly as a National Assembly, elected M. Doumer on the second ballot, M. Briand having withdrawn from the presidential race when the first ballot indicated a preference for his rival. The defeat of M. Briand was interpreted throughout Europe as a triumph of the Nationalist elements. M. Laval, however, prevailed on M. Briand to remain in office, and declared that M. Doumer's election would involve no fundamental change in French foreign policy.

Despite this statement, the following months witnessed the ascendancy of M. Laval in foreign affairs, and the gradual eclipse of his Foreign Minister. The financial crisis precipitated by the threatened collapse of the Austrian *Credit Anstalt* in May; the subsequent panic in Germany which the Hoover moratorium, reluctantly accepted by France, failed to check; Great Britain's suspension of the gold standard in

20. Cf. Vera M. Dean, "European Efforts for Economic Collaboration," *Foreign Policy Reports*, Vol. VII, No. 12, August 19, 1931.

September; the failure of France and the United States to take constructive action with respect to reparation after the Laval-Hoover conversations of October 1931; and the economic paralysis of Eastern Europe, perforce focused the attention of the French government on foreign affairs. France itself, whose diversified economy had hitherto withstood the ravages of the world depression, was faced by March 1932 with an expected deficit of \$240,000,000, and with rapidly growing unemployment, which some observers believed to exceed the million mark. The government, confronted by crucial problems at home and abroad, made no effort, however, to effect a radical change in its foreign policy. The Laval cabinet resigned on January 7, 1932, following the death of André Maginot, Minister of War, and M. Briand's retirement from the Quai d'Orsay for reasons of ill-health, and M. Laval formed his second cabinet, in which he took the portfolio of foreign affairs. On February 16, however, he was defeated by the Senate, which criticized his foreign policy as conservative, and attacked the electoral reform sponsored by his supporters.²¹

21. Cf. p. 52.

After Paul Painlevé, a Republican Socialist, had vainly sought to form a Left ministry, M. Tardieu succeeded in constituting his third cabinet on February 23. That M. Tardieu intended henceforth to place greater emphasis on foreign policy was indicated both by the fact that he took the portfolio of foreign affairs, and by the conciliatory tone of his ministerial declaration.²² Furthermore, in his speech of April 6, with which he opened the electoral campaign, he assured the voters that he would vigorously follow the policy of "firmness and conciliation" pursued by Poincaré, Briand, Laval and himself—thus linking four names which to all but his party followers stand for somewhat different conceptions of foreign affairs—and asserted that such a policy was France's only possible choice of three alternatives, the other two being "negative nationalism" and "rash internationalism." It is with this program, which envisages a more active, if no more disinterested, participation by France in European affairs, that M. Tardieu will go before the voters in the general elections, the results of which may have an important influence on the course of international affairs.

22. Cf. p. 51.

**Statement of the Ownership, Management, Circulation, Etc.,
Required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912 of
Foreign Policy Reports**

Published bi-weekly at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1932.
State of New York, County of New York, ss.:

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Esther G. Ogden, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Secretary of the Foreign Policy Association, Incorporated, publisher of FOREIGN POLICY REPORTS, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in Section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse side of this form, to wit:

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FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION, Incorporated.
By ESTHER G. OGDEN, Secretary.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of March, 1932.
[Seal] CAROLYN E. MARTIN, Notary Public.
New York County, New York County Clerk's No. 295. Reg. No. 3M346. (My commission expires March 30, 1933.)